



## VIII. SUBDIVISION AND PLANNED DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

### A. Purpose and intent.

Subdivisions may be processed under the provisions of the Town of Los Gatos Zoning Ordinance as a standard subdivision or in conjunction with a Planned Development overlay zone. The maximum density of new subdivisions in hillside areas is determined by the use of a slope density formula that diminishes residential densities as the slope of the natural terrain increases.

The purpose of the PD overlay zone, as it relates to hillside areas, is to encourage the appropriate location of residential units in the least restrictive development areas of the site. The intent is to significantly reduce the amount of grading, roads, and other alterations to the existing environment, to minimize the visual impact of the development, and to retain the maximum amount of continuous open space in its natural state.

Refer to the  
Town's  
Zoning  
Ordinance

Site constraints and the implementation of the Hillside Development Standards and Guidelines may not allow a specific site to be developed to the maximum density allowed by the Zoning Ordinance.

### B. Applicability of standards.

In addition to all applicable standards and guidelines of the previous chapters, the following development standards and guidelines apply to all Planned Development applications in hillside areas.

### C. Least restrictive development areas (LRDA)

1. Hillside residential development shall preserve open space and protect significant natural features in the layout and design of streets, lots, and grading patterns in subdivisions and planned developments. Development shall be limited to the least restrictive development areas as defined below.



2. The least restrictive development areas within sub-areas 2 through 9 of the Los Gatos Hillside Specific Plan shall be defined as those areas:
  - a. Below the ridge view protection line as defined in Chapter III, Section D.3.
  - b. Outside riparian corridors,
  - c. With a 30 percent slope or less, and
  - d. Where the impact on the natural hillside environment including vegetation, wildlife corridors, cut and fill slopes, and natural watersheds is minimized.
3. Within Sub-areas 2 through 9 of the Hillside Specific Plan, development is prohibited outside the least restrictive development areas unless there is no feasible alternative.
4. The Blossom Hill Open Space Study contains a map identifying the least restrictive development area for Sub-area 1, of the Hillside Specific Plan. Development applications for property located outside sub-area 1 shall be required to map the least restrictive development areas for their individual sites

## **D. Exceptions to development within LRDA.**

Within Sub-area 1 of the Hillside Specific Plan, development outside of the least restrictive development areas, as identified by the Blossom Hill Open Space Study, shall be prohibited except when all of the following conditions exist:

1. The development is clearly in compliance with the provisions of the Hillside Development Standards and Guidelines, Hillside Specific Plan, and General Plan.
2. Development outside of the least restrictive development areas results in minimal grading, tree removal and/or changes to the natural landscape and is more advantageous as determined by the decision making body.
3. Access to a development within a least restrictive development area can only be attained by developing a road or driveway outside a least restrictive development area.
4. Project visibility from any valley floor viewing platform shall not exist or shall be significantly less than development within the LRDA.



## **E. Development standards and guidelines.**

Refer to the  
Town's  
Grading  
Ordinance

### **1. Site preparation.**

#### **Standards:**

- a. Grading shall be kept to a minimum and shall be performed in a way that respects all significant natural features and visually blends with adjacent natural areas.
- b. The existing natural grade as well as the proposed final grade shall be shown on all elevations submitted with plans.
- c. Graded areas shall appear as smooth flowing contours of varying gradients, preferably with slopes of 2:1 to 5:1. Sharp cuts and fills and long linear slopes that have uniform grade should be avoided.

#### **Guidelines:**

- a. Grading should be avoided in areas where the slope is greater than 25 percent.
- b. Pad and terrace grading should be avoided to the maximum extent possible. However, if these techniques are used, the pad configuration should be softened with variable, undulating slopes created to give a more natural appearance (i.e. contour grading techniques – see Chapter III section A).

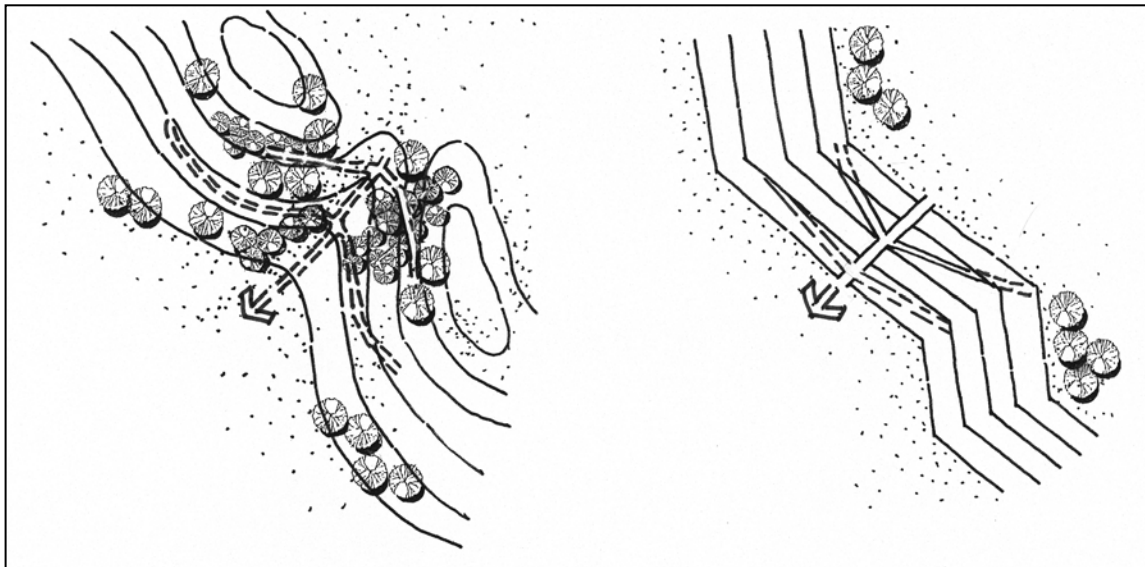
### **2. Drainage.**

#### **Standards:**

- a. Upslope development shall not negatively impact downslope drainage.
- b. Natural drainage courses shall be preserved. Drainage features should be incorporated as an integral part of the project design in order to enhance the overall aesthetic and natural quality of the development.

#### **Guidelines:**

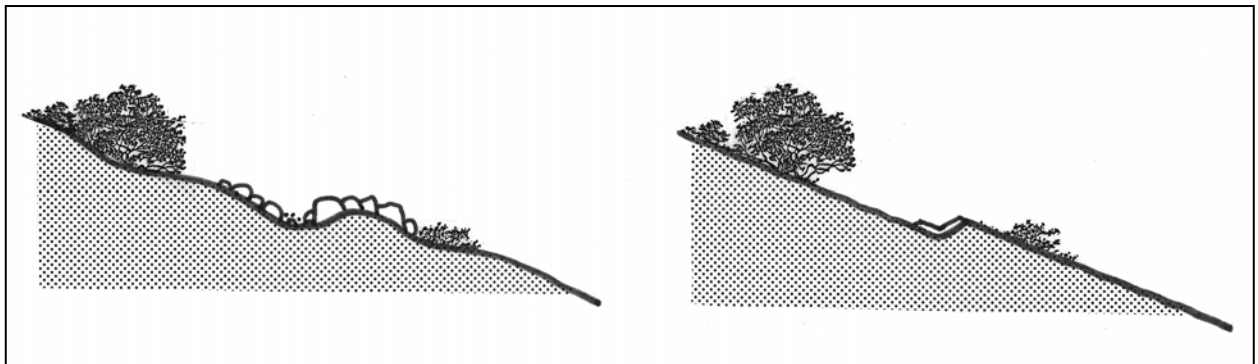
- a. Where terrace drains are required, they should follow a landform slope configuration. Down drains should be placed in the least conspicuous locations.



**Do this**

**Don't do this**

- b. Drainage channels and brow ditches should receive a naturalizing treatment including native rock and landscaping so that the structure appears as an integral part of the environment and should be placed in the least visible locations.



**Do this**

**Don't do this**

### **3. Lot configuration and building locations.**

#### **Standards:**

- a. The layout of lots shall be derived from the form of the land. The development plan shall adapt to existing topography and natural features, avoiding unnecessary alteration of landforms.



- b. Lot patterns shall offer a variety of lot shapes and sizes influenced by topography and natural features.
- c. Projects shall incorporate varied setbacks, multiple orientations, side-entry garages, and other site planning techniques to preserve open spaces, protect natural features, and reduce the monotony of repetitive designs.
- d. Building footprints shall be indicated on grading plans and shall be staked on site in order to assist in the review of proposed building locations.
- e. Graded areas shall be designed with manufactured slopes located on the uphill side of buildings, thereby hiding the slope behind the building.

### **Guidelines:**

- a. Location of development is encouraged in order to preserve environmentally sensitive areas, existing natural features and open space, and to reduce the potential for fire hazard, erosion, and excess runoff.

## **4. Street layout and driveways.**

### **Standards:**

- a. Hillside street and drainage standards shall reflect a rural rather than urban character and shall allow for special designs where natural features such as rocks, slopes, and trees require special treatment.

Refer to the  
Hillside  
Specific Plan

### **Guidelines:**

- a. Streets, driveways, parking, and emergency vehicular access should be aligned to conform, as closely as possible, to existing grades, minimizing the need for the grading of slopes. They should not greatly alter the physical and visual character of the hillside by creating large notches in ridgelines or by defining wide straight alignments.
- b. Driveways that serve more than one parcel are encouraged as a method of reducing unnecessary grading, paving, and site disturbance. Joint driveway entrances shall have street addresses for all residences using the driveway.
- c. Driveway approaches should be located to maximize on-street parking, especially on curves or cul-de-sac bulbs.
- d. Road lighting should be limited to intersections, dangerous curves, dead ends, and multi-use parking areas, and shall be installed to "cut-off" standards.



- e. Roadway and driveway graded banks should be provided with planting of grasses and native trees and shrubs, and include irrigation devices to ensure maintenance of landscaping until it is permanently established.

## **5. Trails.**

The development of a hillside trail network is an important goal of the Town of Los Gatos to increase public recreational opportunities as well as maximize access to regional parks and open space preserves.

### **Standards:**

- a. All new subdivision applications shall be reviewed for compliance with the Trails section of the Los Gatos and Santa Clara County General Plans.

Refer to the  
Los Gatos and  
Santa Clara  
County  
General Plans

### **Guidelines:**

- a. Where possible, trail easement dedication to the Town and construction of trails shall be a condition of subdivision approval.
- b. Trails should be designed for multiple use.
- c. CC&Rs or maintenance districts should be formed so that trail maintenance expenses will be borne by property owners in the subdivision.
- d. Trails should be located away from existing residential areas wherever possible.
- e. "Cross-country" type trails should be developed, as opposed to trails bordering roads.
- f. Trails should be located through areas containing scenic natural resources as well as those dedicated for open space wherever possible.





- f. Trail design standards should be developed and included in planned development documents or subdivision plans that:
- limit trail use to pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian use only
  - prevent use by all motorized vehicles
  - protect the natural environment
  - promote safe recreational use
  - determine appropriate width
  - establish policies regarding fencing location and type
  - incorporate erosion control measures

